THE STORY OF RADIO FREE LONDON by Alexander Baron

In Memorium: Nigel Grant – And Some Unnecessary Preamble

I scanned this publication on December 11, surfing while I did so, when I learned the sad news that Nigel Grant had died on August 8 this year. Although I hadn't seen him for nearly two decades, and indeed had only met him in the flesh three times, if my recollection is correct, it still came as a shock. Of late it seems that half the things I publish on this site are disguised or overt obituaries.

A few words about this publication. For one thing I have apparently misspelt the name Myers as Meyers; humble apologies Kenny. There may be, indeed almost certainly are, other errors, but nothing major I should think, (Reference 8 on page 26, "Radio Mercur" refers, obviously, to "Radio Mercury") . The original was written using my beloved *WordStar* wordprocessor at a time when to me DTP was a meaningless acronym, so both the formatting and the layout leave much to be desired.

There was a strange aftermath to the publication of *Pirates Of The Airwaves*; shortly after mailing out a few copies, including to Nigel himself, I received a phone call from a man whose name now eludes me but who said he was a solicitor. Nigel had been to see him, he said, and there were some concerns about the publication. I can't recall what they were, or even if he told me, likewise I can't for one moment imagine Nigel thought it contained anything defamatory, at least certainly not of him or of any of his colleagues, but the solicitor did say at one point "You gave out a young lady's phone number", to which I replied "It's public knowledge", and pointed out that Nigel often gave out two numbers on the air. If I recall, this terminated the conversation, or as good as.

Wondering what if anything I could have done to warrant this, I decided to give Nigel and the station some space, but sadly I had no further contact with either. The reasons for this were totally unrelated to RFL; I was at that time heavily involved with a legal campaign, of which I will say no more here except that it left me with a bad taste in my mouth; I was also learning – or trying to learn – some basic programming, and was at one point grappling with QuickBASIC, C, and Assembly Language simultaneously. Suffice it say to that none of these came to anything, then I was writing fairly regularly for two publishers, both of whom ripped me off, and against one of whom I obtained a substantial judgment – and got paid in full. And at some point I also went down with chickenpox. By the time I might

have got back to RFL I had met "Rabbi Cohen" (through the aforementioned legal campaign as it happens), and we put together *A Goy Pries Into The "Talmud"...*; we also put together *The War Against Halakhah*, or at least I did, and he ran his eye over it without voicing disapproval. The rest as they say, is history, a history which in this case led to my suffering years of unwarranted aggravation from Organised Jewry, the odious Gerry Gable, and worst of all the legal authorities.

The interested reader will find more about my trials and tribulations elsewhere on this site, suffice it to say here that I came good in the end, while others were left with egg on their faces and hefty legal bills. The end result though, as far as RFL is concerned, is that I completely lost contact and indeed stopped listening to the radio altogether. Then the world had moved on too, and the Internet, including Internet Radio, has made pirate radio more or less redundant. At the time of writing, RFL is not on the air, and apparently hasn't been for some time.

Yesterday, after collating and compressing this pamphlet, I decided on the off-chance to dial one of the aforementioned telephone numbers, suitably amended for the new area code. When the phone was answered almost at once, I explained to the young lady on the other end that her number had been used in the early 90s as a contact number for RFL Radio. And hey, surprise, surprise, the lady concerned was not so young, but the same age as me. In fact she was none other than Debbie who had manned the phone-in desk all those years ago. She filled me in on the background to Nigel's illness, and we talked of old times.

Without further ado then, here in Portable Document Format is what was and what I still believe to be the most comprehensive history of Radio Free London published to date, up until its original publication all those years ago.

I have also included a scan of the article I wrote for *Metal Hammer*, and which was published in the August 28-September 9, 1990 issue at page 85. Incidentally, the title of both publications is also a pun on the 1979 Charlie Dore hit *Pilot Of The Airwaves*.

Al in Sydenham,
December 14, 2008

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This page was updated January 20, 2014. The previous, archived version, can be found here. Incidentally, the article refers to "(see photos)"; Jodie took a whole reel of them as far as I recall, and I gave them to the magazine. Presumably they still have them. And just for the record, not only was this the only article I ever wrote for *Metal Hammer*, I never got paid for it either!